

# Supernova

BY JULIAN "MR. J" BRAET



*Nova Mini Graphics. Or, Honey, it'll Nova be the same.*

**About the author:** Mr. J owns Mr. J's Signs and Graphics in Lyndhurst, N.J., and is the creator of Xcaliber striping brushes and preservative. For more methods to the madness, check out Mr. J's three-volume Video Classroom series, Jersey Style Airbrush & Lettering. You can send questions about "Jersey Style" lettering to Mr. J at [JXCAL@aol.com](mailto:JXCAL@aol.com).

ANYTIME A CUSTOMER comes to my shop with a hot rod, custom car or truck that he or she wants to have *tricked up*, I get a warm glow all over my body. If you've ever seen me you know that could mean a *lotta* heat.

So, when the owner of this bright red 1963 Chevy Nova showed up at my studio wanting to add some *mini* graphics to his newly refinished hot rod, I couldn't wait to get started.

He asked me to "just break up the sides with a little color."

I didn't even have to show him any layouts ahead of time.

"Just do what you think it needs," he said.

We agreed on a price and I was left to do what I wanted. Boy, I wish I could've cloned this guy.

While I was doodling rough ideas for the sides of the Nova, I couldn't stop thinking what my friend and fellow *pinhead* Steve Stanford (automotive illustrator, lettering and striping master) once said.

"The majority of young people today do not understand our generation's love for the automobile as a *hot rod* or *custom car*," Stanford said. "They've been told to buy a new car, add big wheels and put in loud speakers. That'll make it different."

While I do agree with Steve, I believe as artists we are responsible to *ed-u-cate dese youths* of today about our beautiful culture. We need to go back to our roots and keep this pure American art form alive.

When my sign or vehicle lettering slows down a bit, I know I can always count on some type of *hot rod* to even out the week. So, in a nutshell, don't turn those custom graphic jobs away. They're fun and profitable.

*Julian*





I made some rough pencil sketches. I chose this layout because it has just two design elements. They will start in the middle of the door and end toward the rear of the car. I lay out the design by hand (I could have used my computer to generate the design, but this was more fun). I use a stick of soft charcoal on some 12" bond paper, followed by a felt pen to true-up the lines. I follow the outlines with my electro pounce machine to perforate the pattern. The electro pounce machine actually burns small holes in the paper to allow either charcoal powder or white pounce powder to pass through the pattern, creating the outlines that we can tape out. Now I use the white powder to transfer my design to both sides of the car.



I go over the pounced lines with a white Stabilo® pencil (these are the same water-soluble pencils used in laying out signs). After this is done, lightly wipe off the powder with a slightly damp paper towel. The Stabilo will not affect the paint.



Using blue fine-line masking tape, I lay out the design with 1/8" and 1/2" tape. Make sure all lines are straight and all curves are smooth. Note: Before any taping or painting is to be done, you must clean all surfaces of any wax or grease. I used Rapid-Prep to remove any contaminants off the surface, followed by clean water.



Follow the fine-line with 3/4" automotive-grade masking tape. Use pre-mask tape to finish off. Since I wasn't going to airbrush a large area, I decided not to paper off the rest of the car. Use your own discretion.



Now I mix ivory lettering enamel for the base coat in an unwaxed coffee cup. Add a few drops of fish-eye eliminator and a couple of drops of hardener for extra durability. I paint this using a jet stroke 1" truck-lettering flat. (You can also use a foam roller or a foam brush.)



Wait about 15 minutes and mix up the chrome yellow. I reduce this with Hi-Temp reducer at a ratio of 60 percent reducer to 40 percent paint. (All the airbrush colors are 1 Shot lettering enamels and are mixed like this.) Now using my airbrush, I start at the rear of the car, moving forward to the doors covering all the ivory.

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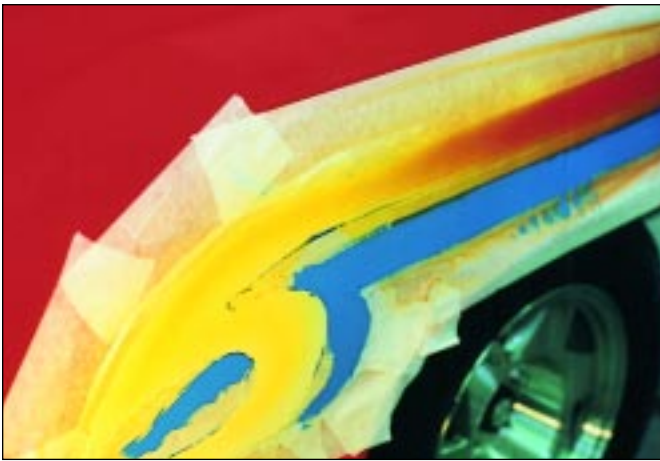
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While the yellow tacks up I airbrush medium orange from the rear to just before the design starts to turn down.



Rubine red is sprayed from the rear to about halfway down the side.



After a few minutes I remove the transfer tape that covers the second graphic. Now I hand paint in the process blue. Notice that I didn't re-tape the orange graphic. That's because I'm only going to airbrush a small amount of color onto the top and bottom of the graphic. You could wait until the top graphic is thoroughly dry and then paper over it, but I didn't have that luxury; this was a one-day job.



I start to airbrush along the bottom using brilliant blue to create a darker edge.



Now I mix some process blue and white to airbrush the top to give a rounded look.



The final airbrush highlights are done with polar white to the top edges of the graphic. Remember, don't get carried away, keep it simple.



After the graphics have completely dried I hand pinstripe the top graphic with process blue using an Xcaliber 00 striping brush, and a piece of 1/2" magnetic tape as my guide. Then the bottom graphic is striped with a mix of imitation silver and a few drops of polar white added for durability. (You can also use 1/4" masking tape.)



A close-up shows the completed graphics with a varnish shade added to the blue graphic to help with the 3D look.



The finished graphics. Honey, it'll Nova be the same.